GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AYURVEDA,YOGA & NATUROPATHY,UNANI,SIDDHA AND HOMEOPATHY (AYUSH)
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1696
ANSWERED ON:10.03.2017
Smuggling of Medicinal Plants
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Will the Minister of AYURVEDA,YOGA & NATUROPATHY,UNANI,SIDDHA AND HOMEOPATHY (AYUSH) be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of AYURVEDA, YOGA AND NATUROPATHY, UNANI, SIDDHA AND HOMOEOPATHY (AYUSH) be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the foreign scientists and personnel from pharmaceutical companies visit India as tourists and smuggle the medicinal plants after getting the knowledge about its traditional use with the help of local people;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the number of species of plants which have become extinct;

(c) the details of the steps taken by the Government to check smuggling of these medicinal plants;

(d) whether the Government is considering to launch any campaign or scheme to search for herbs/medicinal plants found in the forests of the country including Jharkhand and Maharashtra; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF AYURVEDA,
YOGA & NATUROPATHY, UNANI, SIDDHA AND HOMOEOPATHY
(SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK)

(a) & (b): As per information available with National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of AYUSH, no such instances have been recorded about the foreign scientists and personnel from pharmaceutical companies visit India as tourists and smuggle the medicinal plants after getting the knowledge about its traditional use with the help of local people.

As per information, no hard data is available regarding the number of species of medicinal plants which have become extinct. However, according to the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), an organization under Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, about 70 medicinal and aromatic plants species are threatened due to various anthropogenic activities. The threatened medicinal and aromatic plants are as follows:

"Aconitum balfouri, Aconitum chasmanthum, Aconitum deinorrhizum, Aconitum falconeri var latilobum, Aconitum ferox, Aconitum heterophyllum, Acorus gramineus, Allium stracheyi, Amyris balsamifera, Angelica glauca, Anogeissus sericea var. numularia, Aquillaria mallaccensis, Aquilaria khasiana, Aristolochia bracteolata, Aristolochia indica, Arnebia benthamii, Atropa acuminata, Berberis affinis, Berberis apiculata, Berberis aristata, Bergenia stracheyi, Boronia megastigma, Capparis pachyphylla, Carum villosum, Cedrus deodara, Colchicum luteum, Coptis teeta, Coscinium fenestratum, Dactylorhiza hatagirea, Dioscorea deltoidea, Elaeocarpus prunifolius, Ephedra gerardiana, Ferrula gummosa, Gaultheria fragrantissima, Gentiana kurooa, Gloriosa superba, Hedychium coronarium, Hedychium spicatum, Hyoscyamus niger, Hydnocarpus macrocarpa, Inula racemosa, Iphigenia indica, Iphigenia pallida, Iphigenia stellata, Jurinea dolomiaea, Kolanchoe roseus, Madhuca insignis, Myristica fragrans, Myroxylon balsamum var. pereirae, Nardostachys grandiflora, Origanum vulgare, Panax pseudoginseng, Picrorhiza kurrooa, Podophyllum hexandrum, Pogostemon cablin, Pterocarpus santalinus, Rauvolfia serpentina, Rheum emodi, Santalum album, Satureja horensis, Saussurea bracteata, Saussurea costus, Saussurea gnaphalodes, Swertia chirayita, Taxus wallichiana, Taxocarpus kurzii, Urginea indica, Urginea maritima and Vitex peduncularis".

(c): Government is aware of the possible instances of illegal harvesting of plants including medicinal herbs / plants from the forests and their smuggling.

Prevention of smuggling of flora and fauna from forests including medicinal plants is primarily done through enforcement of the Indian Forest Act, 1972; Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and the rules under these Acts apart from State specific forest related Acts.

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau is taking steps to prevent and check smuggling of medicinal plants by sensitizing and capacity building of various agencies involved in enforcement of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

(d) & (e): Currently, there is no such proposal with Ministry of AYUSH to launch any specific campaign or scheme to search for herbs/medicinal plants found in the forests of the country including Jharkhand and Maharashtra.

However, the NMPB, Ministry of AYUSH is presently implementing a Central Sector Scheme on "Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants" under which project based support for survey, inventorization of medicinal plants is provided to different State Government agencies, Research Institutions, Universities etc. throughout the country including State of Jharkhand and Maharashtra.

In addition, different Research Councils viz. Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Central Council for Research in Siddha (CCRS), Central Council for Research in Unani Medicines (CCRUM) and Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) of Ministry of AYUSH and Botanical Survey of India (BSI) are also carrying out survey, inventorization of medicinal plants in different parts of the country.